

Assemblyman PAUL KORETZ

Forty-second Assembly District

proudly representing the communities of West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, Century City, Westwood, Bel Air, Brentwood, West Los Angeles, Hollywood, Hancock Park, Universal City, Studio City, and Sherman Oaks



For Immediate Release
August 24, 2004

Contact: Teresa Stark
(916) 319-2042
Cell (916) 715-2203

Koretz Bill Banning Declawing of Exotic Cats Goes to Schwarzenegger

(Sacramento) – Legislation by Assemblyman Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) that would protect native, wild and exotic cat species such as lions, tigers, cougars and bobcats from the crippling and unnecessary surgical procedure known as “declawing” today was approved by the State Senate and now heads to the Governor’s Desk. AB 1857 does not apply to domestic house cats.

AB 1857, sponsored by The Paw Project, will ban declawing of big cats in the state’s animal cruelty statutes. The bill makes it a misdemeanor for anyone to perform the surgery and comes with a possible penalty of up to a year in jail and/or a \$10,000 fine. This penalty is consistent with other violations of animal cruelty statutes, such as cock-fighting or maliciously maiming an animal.

“Declawed cats are not safer to be around and can become dangerous biters. There are many stories of people being attacked and gravely injured by the teeth and mouth a declawed cat,” said Assemblyman Koretz. “In fact, declawing these big cats can lead to a false sense of security and might encourage handlers to take risks with these animals that they might not otherwise.”

The effects of declawing are particularly debilitating for big cats and can result in a variety of painful complications and even lameness. Zoos, circuses and the majority of the entertainment industry do not declaw cats. But some private owners of these cats and those who exhibit these cats for profit still choose to declaw, despite the fact that the procedure is of no benefit to the cat or its handlers. The bill does allow for declawing for therapeutic purposes only – when the procedure is medically necessary to protect the cat’s health.

The American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians, and the American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians all agree declawing these cats is "ill-advised" and have even felt it was an important enough issue to officially "oppose" the procedure because of known complications that can cause crippling and death of these big cats.

“This practice is illegal in several industrial countries around the world. California should take the lead in this country and outlaw this barbaric procedure,” said Koretz. “Governor Schwarzenegger is an animal lover -- I believe he will do the right thing and sign this bill to protect these majestic creatures,” he concluded.

Governor Schwarzenegger has until September 30th to act on the bill, either by signing, vetoing or taking no action on the bill, which would allow it to become law.

Capitol Office: State Capitol • P.O. Box 942849 • Sacramento, CA 94249-0042 • phone (916) 319-2042
District Office: Peterson Building • 8490 Sunset Boulevard, Suite 542 • West Hollywood, CA 90069 • phone (310) 652-4242

Printed on Recycled Paper

